(b) and (c) Selections are made by Railway Recruitment Boards on All India basis. State-wise or domicile-wise statistics of the candidates are not maintained by Railway Recruitment Boards.

(d) Railway Recruitment Boards select candidates for various Group 'C' posts on the basis of their performances in the written examination. Written examination contain multiple choice/objective type questions only. For certain categories of posts, written examination is followed by Aptitude Test, Skill Test or Interview.

Technology banks for SSIs

3793. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to plan or create technology bank for small and medium enterprises; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) A Technology Bank for Small and Medium Enterprises has been established with the incorporation, on 17 November 2005, of a company named, 'India SME Technology Services Limited' with the Small Industries Development Bank of India, Oriental Bank of Commerce and Indian Bank as its initial promoters. The State Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank have also committed to contribute to the share capital of this company.

Restructuring of ship breaking yard at Alang in Gujarat

†3794. SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the Asia's largest ship breaking yard at Alang in Gujarat is in the State of desolation and about 40,000 workers engaged in manual ship breaking have deserted Alang and returned to Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any initiative to ascertain the reasons for the said circumstances; and

(c) whether Government propose to take any step to restore its earlier status and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) and (b) About 40000 workers were engaged at Alang ship breaking yard when ship recycling activity was at its peak during 1998-99. Compared to this, only about 5000 workers were engaged during 2005-06. The ship breaking activity has declined due to several reasons mentioned below:—

(i) The prices of old ships for demolition in the world market have gone up from US $ 150/pmt to 385/pmt during last five years whereas prices of steel scrap have not risen to the same extent in India.

(ii) Due to recovery of the global economy and rise in the freight rates, it is more economical to ply ships than to demolish them.

(iii) Due to favourable tax structure in Bangladesh, the industry is facing severe competition from Bangladesh.

(iv) Less stringent implementation of ship recycling regulations in Bangladesh has resulted in shifting of tanker business to Bangladesh.

(v) Creation of fresh capacity of low cost raw material *viz.* sponge iron for use in manufacture of re-rollables by mini-steel plants has further added to the price war of re-rollables.

(c) The following steps have been taken to restore its earlier status:—

(i) GMB has developed adequate physical, social, health and environmental infrastructure.

(ii) Ships imported for breaking have been exempted from the additional duty of 4% which is applicable to almost all items of imports. Ships for breaking is one of the very few items exempted from this new levy.

(iii) 5% custom duty (earlier it was 0%) has been imposed on melting scrap bringing it at par with duty on import of ships.